

# Communications

Education of the public and communications among the various partners is a strong component of the county’s response plan.

The plan focuses on helping people and businesses prepare through messages designed to:

- ◆ Educate residents about local planning efforts.
- ◆ Encourage residents to prepare themselves.
- ◆ Encourage and increase better hygiene habits to prevent the spread of germs.
- ◆ Encourage residents to sign up for the county’s Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean).
- ◆ Encourage planning efforts among private sector entities.

Various communications methods will be used to reach a diversified audience:

- ◆ The Fairfax County Web site.
- ◆ Community Emergency Alert Network.
- ◆ E-mail newsletters/bulletins.
- ◆ Paper/direct mail newsletters.
- ◆ Special events.
- ◆ Exhibits.
- ◆ Speakers bureau.
- ◆ Direct mailing to homeowners associations.
- ◆ Broadcast media.
- ◆ Reverse 9-1-1.

Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit.

- ◆ Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- ◆ Put used tissues in a wastebasket.
- ◆ Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don’t have a tissue.
- ◆ Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- ◆ Stay at home if you are sick.



# Resources

## Fairfax County Resources

- ◆ Fairfax County’s Pandemic Flu Web Page [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu)
- ◆ Fairfax County Health Department [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd)

## State Resources

- ◆ Virginia Department of Health [www.vdh.virginia.gov/pandemicflu](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/pandemicflu)

## National Resources

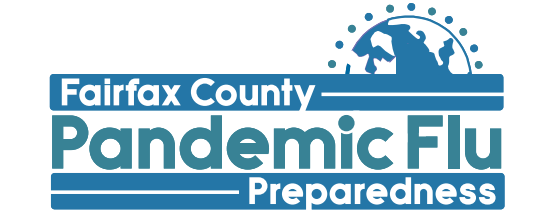
- ◆ Official U.S. Government Pandemic Flu Web Site [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- ◆ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/](http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/)
- ◆ National Institutes of Health [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)
- ◆ DHS “Ready: Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.” [www.ready.gov/america](http://www.ready.gov/america)  
[www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business)  
[www.ready.gov/kids](http://www.ready.gov/kids)
- ◆ Metropolitan Medical Response System [www.mmrs.fema.gov/main/avianflu.aspx](http://www.mmrs.fema.gov/main/avianflu.aspx)
- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm)

## International Resources

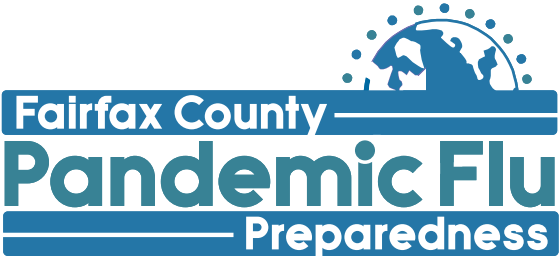
- ◆ World Health Organization [www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en)

## Print Resources

Printed materials are available at county buildings, including public libraries and Board of Supervisors’ offices. For additional information, call 703-FAIRFAX (324-7329), TTY 711.



[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu)



## Fairfax County’s Pandemic Influenza Response Plan



*Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request.*

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# Response Plan

The Fairfax County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan describes the coordinated local strategy to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic and supplements the Commonwealth of Virginia and federal pandemic flu response plans.

An influenza pandemic has the potential to cause more death and illness than any other public health threat. A pandemic, or a global epidemic, can occur when there is a mutation in the genetic structure of the influenza virus resulting in a new strain of virus that most or all of the world’s human population has had no previous exposure and thus has no immunity. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. **Currently, there is no pandemic flu.**

Fairfax County’s Pandemic Influenza Response Plan effort began in the fall of 2005, and involves numerous county agencies, the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, and the towns of Herndon and Vienna.

County planning initiatives are being undertaken in accordance with the emergency plans of the Virginia Department of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization. In addition, county officials are involved with the National Capital Region’s efforts, which are being led by the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission.

Additional partners are the private sector, local hospitals, clinics, health care providers, and nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

## Response Plan Goals

The Fairfax County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan provides a guide for Fairfax County government on how to respond before, during and after an influenza pandemic.

The plan complements and is an annex to the Fairfax County Emergency Operation Plan and provides guidance to county agencies and the community on maintaining critical services during a pandemic. The plan follows the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidance for developing pandemic influenza response plans and is intended as a companion to the Virginia Department of Health Emergency Operations Plan, Influenza Attachment.

The county’s Response Plan has five main goals:

- ◆ Contain and control disease outbreak.
- ◆ Limit the number of illnesses and deaths.
- ◆ Preserve continuity of critical government functions.
- ◆ Minimize social disruption.
- ◆ Minimize economic losses.

### Flu Terms Defined

**Seasonal (or common) flu** is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

**Avian (or bird) flu** is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 variant is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no human immunity and no vaccine is available.

**Pandemic flu** is virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic flu.

Source: [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

## Pandemic Strategies

Six principles of pandemic preparedness are outlined and addressed by the county and its partners in the Fairfax County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan.

- ◆ Develop or enhance countywide disease surveillance programs.
- ◆ Ensure mass vaccination plans are in place to rapidly administer vaccine to priority groups and to the public.
- ◆ Establish guidelines for the use of antiviral medications by medical staff for treatment and prevention of influenza.
- ◆ Develop methods to implement non-medical measures to decrease the spread of disease throughout the county.
- ◆ Assist local health care system partners, response agencies, elected officials, the business community and community-based organizations with pandemic preparedness planning aimed at maintaining health care services and essential services.
- ◆ Communicate with and educate the public, health care providers, local government and community leaders, and the media in conjunction with county agencies on the consequences of pandemic flu and how residents can prepare.

*“Planning for pandemic flu is not just a government issue. It is important that residents understand their individual responsibility to prepare themselves and their families for pandemic flu.”*

Gloria Addo-Ayensu, M.D., M.P.H.  
Fairfax County Health Director

## Staying Healthy

Residents should take steps to ensure that they remain healthy during a pandemic. The Fairfax County Health Department offers these suggestions.

- ◆ Avoid crowds during influenza season.
- ◆ Minimize visitors to the home.
- ◆ Visit those who have influenza only if necessary, and stand more than 3 feet away from them.
- ◆ Keep personal items separate if a household member has influenza. Clean surfaces around them often with a detergent cleanser.
- ◆ Don’t share personal items or drinks.
- ◆ Drink plenty of water.
- ◆ Don’t smoke.
- ◆ Exercise regularly.
- ◆ Take a multivitamin daily, especially older adults.
- ◆ Decrease stress, stay optimistic and remain active.

## Be Prepared

Everyone should plan ahead in case they become ill with influenza. This is especially important for individuals who live alone, are single parents or caregivers.

- ◆ Have enough fluids and other supplies, such as tissues, on hand to last 1 to 2 weeks.
- ◆ Have medication for fever and a thermometer handy.
- ◆ Know what options are available at work when you are ill, for example, working from home.
- ◆ Have a backup caregiver for loved ones.
- ◆ Keep emergency numbers and self-care instructions in a place where everyone in the house can access them.
- ◆ Stock up on basic supplies and food.
- ◆ Talk with your neighbors and share this information.

## Critical County Services

When a pandemic is imminent, Fairfax County will activate its Emergency Operations Center to prepare and execute actions to ensure a continuity of government. The Office of Emergency Management will serve as the lead in continuity of government planning, as well as the lead for executing the appropriate county response during a pandemic.

The county’s Emergency Operation Plan outlines the areas of responsibility for county agencies and establishes the legal and organizational basis for operations in Fairfax County. As outlined by both Virginia law and Chapter 14 of the Fairfax County Ordinance, the county executive is the county’s director of emergency management.

There are basic, fundamental county services and operations, such as fire, police, emergency medical services and others, that must continue to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and community during a pandemic.

Through the development of Continuity of Operations Plans, or COOPs, agencies are prepared to address the unique consequences of a pandemic, to:

- ◆ Ensure the continuous performance of critical functions. The county has created an action plan of critical functions and will reallocate staff from non-critical areas as needed.
- ◆ Maintain the integrity of critical facilities, equipment, systems, records and other assets.
- ◆ Reduce or mitigate disruptions to operations.
- ◆ Reduce illness or loss of life.
- ◆ Achieve a timely and orderly recovery after the pandemic.
- ◆ Establish lines of succession and delegation of authority.
- ◆ Identify personnel needed to perform the agencies’ critical functions.
- ◆ Identify means of communication within the agency and with other departments, jurisdictions and the public.
- ◆ Establish isolation and quarantine as needed.